

Washington - The House of Representatives approved legislation today by a vote of 396 to 22 making changes to House ethics and lobbying rules, but did not include the requirement that Members of Congress convicted of bribery or other crimes must forfeit their taxpayer funded pensions.

A House panel yesterday refused to allow debate of two amendments authored by Congressman Terry: one to eliminate pensions for Members of Congress who are convicted criminals; and another to require that all Members receive an updated manual to explain and ensure compliance with new ethics rules.

**"I am extremely disappointed that Democrats would not allow a debate today on two common-sense amendments to improve ethics in Congress and restore the public's trust in elected leaders," Terry said. "Ethics reform will pass today under Speaker Pelosi's banner of 'change' in Washington, but shamefully under this bill a Member of Congress who takes a bribe may still be eligible to collect a taxpayer funded pension.**

**"The Majority also inexplicably refused a practical request that all Members receive an updated manual explaining the new rules this year on congressional earmark transparency and strengthening the House Code of Conduct through vigorous compliance. □ It is an outrage that House Democrats opposed including these common-sense measures."**

Yesterday, Terry and Congressman Tom Price (R-Ga.) offered an amendment to the House Rules Committee to require the House Committee on Standards and Official Conduct to publish an updated manual to explain the new rules governing congressional earmark transparency and what constitutes a Member's financial interest in an earmark request. The Rules Committee opposed the amendment

by a vote of 3 to 7, with 1 Member voting present. However, the Ethics Committee has to date not defined what an earmark is or how all Members must comply with new rules that seek to rightly bring more transparency to earmarking and prevent wasteful spending.

**"The blatant disregard for clarifying issues around common-sense earmark reform is troubling," Price said. "Allowing for greater information and transparency should be the cornerstone of ethics reform, not merely a broken promise by the majority party."**

The Rules Committee also voted 4 to 6 against an en bloc amendment offered by Congressman Terry, Congressman Mark Steven Kirk (R-Ill.) and Congressman John Shadegg (R-Ariz.) mandating that Members of Congress forfeit their congressional pensions should they be convicted of certain felonies.

**"Lawmakers should be held to the highest standards of the law," Kirk said. "The integrity of the Congress should never be called into question. The Majority's refusal to eliminate pensions for Members of Congress convicted of felonies shows the serious inadequacies of these ethics reforms."**

In January, Speaker Pelosi was forced to bring legislation (H.R. 476) to the House floor to deny public pensions to elected officials convicted of certain crimes, partially due to the strong support of Members of Congress, such as the more than 30 cosponsors of Congressman Terry's Public Trust and Accountability Act (H.R. 232). H.R. 476 has not been signed into law.

**"The public expects Members of Congress to be held to a higher ethical standard," Terry said. "While today's bill contains several reforms I support, and similar reforms as the Republican Congress approved last year, this bill falls short in the most obvious of areas and forces me to again question Speaker Pelosi's goals. We could have easily improved the bill through our amendments."**



